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SUBJECT: KUWAIT SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION SEPTEMBER 28-29:
IRAQ, CPA ADMINISTRATOR PAUL BREMER

1. SUMMARY: MEDIA REPORTS OF A STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO CPA ADMINISTRATOR PAUL BREMER THAT KUWAIT SHOULD RECONSIDER SEEKING COMPENSATION FROM IRAQ FOR THE 1990-1991 IRAQI OCCUPATION HAVE SPARKED A FUROR IN THE KUWAITI PRESS OVER THE PAST TWO DAYS. AT LEAST 15 EDITORIALS LAMBAST BREMER AND THE US ON THE ISSUE, WHILE OVER A DOZEN MEMBERS OF THE KUWAITI PARLIAMENT HAVE GONE ON RECORD DENOUNCING THE ALLEGED COMMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. Sample Headlines September 28:

--Al-Anba: "MPs and Politicians Reject Dropping Compensation."
--Al-Seyassa: "Members of Parliament warn the Government against complying with Washington's Request to Drop the Compensations."
--Al-Qabas: "Kuwait: There is an International Resolution and the Issue is non-Negotiable."
--Al-Watan: "Bremer to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia: 'You've had enough compensations.' 'Angry Members of Parliament to the Government: Don't you ever Relinquish the Compensations.'"

Sample Headlines September 29:

--Al-Anba: "Citizens: We will not Relinquish our Compensations and Cabinet Discusses Bremer's Remarks. Poll Shows Overwhelming Popular Rejection of Bremer's Request."
--Al-Watan: "Families of Martyred POWs: Do We Relinquish our Rights after Thirteen Years of Torture?" "Citizens: We Will Not Relinquish our Rights, The Losses are Grave and the Wound has not Healed."

3. News Stories:

Fifteen Members of Parliament expressed strong rejection of Bremer's statements. MP Naser Al-Sanea argued that "Kuwait will never be a milking cow." MP Dr. Deifallah Buramiya stated that "if Bremer is so sympathetic about the (Iraqi) GDP, then he must call for dropping all debts owed by poor countries to the United States." Other MPs who opposed Bremer's calls for dropping compensation claims are MP Abdulla Okash, MP Mekhled Al-Azmi, MP Hussein Muzeid Al-Mutairi, MP Mohammed Al-Fejji, MP Ghanem Al-Mea, MP Fahd Al-Khanna, MP Dr. Yousef Al-Zalzala, MP Badr Sheikhan Al-Farsi, MP Dr. Waleed Al-Tabtabae, MP Dr. Khaled Al-Adwa, and MP Dr. Musallam Al-Barrak.

Al-Rai Al-Aam (9/28) quoted informed sources at the Public Commission for Compensations saying that talking about dropping the compensations is "unacceptable" and argued that the UN has undertaken just measures to compensate those who suffered as a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported (9/28) quoted Minister of Information, Mohammed Abul Hasan's response to Bremer's remarks upon his return from the United States: "This issue was not discussed in New York because it is non-negotiable in the Security Council. The Security Council has said its word and has since referred this matter to the UNCC in Geneva. The committee has approved funds, not only for Kuwait, but also for approximately 44 other countries who sustained losses." "It is not easy to ask countries to give up their claims, such claims belong to individuals, not countries.. In the case of government (claims), this is up to the Security Council which must convene at the request of countries that have incurred losses. No single country can be the exception to the rule; instead, there must be a decision from all countries who are still awaiting their claims. This is not an easy process. There are hopes and there is understanding on the part of some countries but turning this matter into a resolution is not in the upcoming future."

Al-Seyassa reported (9/28) that senior level diplomatic sources said Bremer's comments contradicted statements issued by Ahmed Chalabi during his recent visit to Kuwait. According to the sources, Chalabi reiterated Iraq's commitment to UNSC resolutions, especially those pertaining

to compensation claims, POWs, sovereignty, and Kuwaiti-Iraqi borders.

Al-Seyassa reported (9/29) that upon his return next week, Prime Minister, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed, will discuss the issue of Kuwaiti compensation claims with National Assembly Speaker, Jassim Al-Khorafi, in light of recent statement issued by Amb. Bremer.

Al-Watan (9/29) criticized lack of an official government response to Bremer's statements for the second consecutive day.

All newspapers (9/29) published interviews with citizens, families of the martyrs and POWs and with prominent Kuwait figures all strongly refusing the idea of dropping compensation claims and ardently denouncing Amb. Bremer for his request.

Al-Anba (9/29) published a poll which surveyed the opinion of 1000 Kuwaitis. Some citizens recommended calling in the American Ambassador and handing him a memorandum of protest. --48% expressed astonishment and shock at Bremer's request. --59.8% said Bremer made this request because he knew Kuwait would agree. --55.8% said Bremer's request will not be implemented under U.S. pressure, 40.3% said it will. --64.8% believed Kuwait should reexamine the way it is dealing with Iraq.

Editorials:

14. "What Nonsense!"
Arabic daily Al-Anba's opening editorial opined (9/28): "What right does Bremer have to call on Kuwait to relinquish its rights?... What about other resolutions on similar issues? What if the Iraqi governing council gets dissatisfied with the demarcation of the border, will Bremer...also ask us to relinquish this right? Will he whisper to the American Administration that our POWs do not exist?... Accepting such scorn for international resolutions issued in Kuwait's favor is rejected and unacceptable because compensations are part of Iraq's acknowledgement of the invasion of Kuwait. Any violation or amendment of any of these resolutions is a clear violation of International laws."

15. "Et Tu Bremmer?"
Conservative Islamist MP, Dr. Waleed Al-Tabtabie, wrote in independent Al-Watan (9/28): "It seems that the curse of Iraqi rulers has been passed on to Paul Bremer.... We fear that this slight bout of insanity would continue with Governor Bremer to the extent that he starts calling for annexing Kuwait to greater Iraq.... Mr. Bremer, please remember that prior to invading Kuwait, Saddam also said that Kuwait must drop the debts owed by Iraq. These same claims are now being repeated by Bremer also in his capacity as Iraq's governing authority.... Iraq's ousted leader had met Kuwait's support during the Iraq-Iran war with ingratitude and Bremer is doing the same thing today against Kuwait.... Is this our reward?. Where are Bremer's statements in relation to President Bush's words thanking the Kuwaiti people and telling them that if it wasn't for Kuwait, there would have been no victory in this war?"

16. "We Say No to America"
Liberal Secretary-General of the Kuwait Journalists Association, Faisal Al-Qanaie, wrote in independent Al-Seyassa (9/29): "It seems that Bremer wants to divert attention away from his serious failure in returning normal life to Iraq.... Bremer showed sly and bad intentions when he drew a comparison between Iraqi and Kuwaiti GDPs. It is as if he was inciting sedition and hatred among the countries of the region, similar to what Saddam did before him.... We fear that Bremer's action may lead to a rift in U.S.-Kuwaiti relations. We also fear that America may lose its status among Kuwaitis and it is not in America's interests to lose its friends in Kuwait."

17. "Shame on You Bremer"
Abdul-Rahman Al-Ajmi wrote in independent Al-Seyassa (9/29): "Did Bremer get prior permission from the American Administration, specifically from State Department, to issue these statements? How could these statements correlate with Secretary Powell's description of Kuwait as a `strategic

SIPDIS partner'?... Mr. Bremer angered the Kuwaiti Street and he deserves to be told `Shame on you Bremer.' We hope that the American Ambassador in Kuwait would convey to Washington the Kuwaiti discontent caused by Bremer's remarks."

8. "Generosity from Other's Pockets"
Liberal Media Advisor to the Prime Minister, Sami Al-Nesf, wrote in independent Al-Anba (9/29): "What is more astonishing about Bremer's remarks are his justifications.

Comparing GDP as a legitimate reason for signing off debts also means dropping off the debts owed by Asian, Eastern European, and South American, and poor African countries to the wealthy United States.... Kuwait has offered assistance to the Iraqi people for the past 50 years without emphasizing this favor...Those who voluntarily undertake such acts cannot be accused of giving precedence to money over humanitarian principles, as Bremer tried to imply."

JONES